



Should You Be Gluten-Free? Celiac Disease & Gluten Sensitivity Fast Facts

1. Celiac disease is a genetic autoimmune disease that damages the small intestine and interferes with the absorption of nutrients from food. When people with celiac ingest gluten, the protein in wheat, barley and rye, the whole body is affected.
2. Celiac disease affects 1 in 100 people or 3 million Americans. Since 1950, its prevalence has increased fourfold.
3. There are more than 300 symptoms of celiac disease, and symptoms vary from person to person. Onset can happen at any age.
4. Despite its prevalence, celiac disease is greatly under-diagnosed. Only about 200,000 people know they have it. Currently, it takes 6 to 10 years to receive a diagnosis.
5. Left undiagnosed and untreated, celiac disease can lead to further complications such as osteoporosis, infertility, thyroid disease, and cancer.
6. The burden of undiagnosed celiac disease over a four-year period is estimated to be almost \$4,000.
7. A simple blood test, tissue transglutaminase (tTG), can help determine whether a person might have celiac disease. Celiac disease is hereditary; all first and second-degree relatives should be screened.
8. The treatment for celiac disease is simple: a 100% lifelong gluten-free diet. There are no medications or surgeries that can cure the autoimmune disease.
9. Gluten sensitive individuals exhibit some of the same symptoms as people with celiac disease, but typically test negative for celiac disease in diagnostic blood tests. Gluten sensitive individuals also lack the small intestinal damage that defines celiac disease.
10. Gluten sensitivity is estimated to affect 6% of the U.S. population, or 18 million people. The only treatment is the gluten-free diet.

***Patients: www.CeliacCentral.org
Healthcare Providers: www.CeliacCMECentral.com***